



TESTIMONY

Delivered by Tracy Wodatch, Vice President of Clinical and Regulatory Services
The Connecticut Association for Healthcare at Home

Before the Public Health Committee

March 15, 2013

Raised Bill No. 991

An Act Concerning An Advisory Council on Palliative Care

Senator Gerrratana, Representative Johnson and members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Tracy Wodatch, Vice President of Clinical and Regulatory Services at the Connecticut Association for Healthcare at Home. I am also an RN with 30 years experience in home health, hospice, long term and acute care.

The Association represents 60 licensed and certified home health and hospice agencies that perform 5-million home health and community-based visits in our inner cities and rural Connecticut towns each year.

With a growing Connecticut workforce of 11,000 employees and skilled nurses, *we* are the *only* health providers that walk through the front doors of 14,000 state residents each day and understand the value that technology and interactive data communication brings to person-centered care.

The CT Association for Healthcare at Home supports Raised Bill 991 An Act Concerning An Advisory Council on Palliative Care.

There is much confusion over the differences between palliative care and hospice care. Both provide comfort, pain and symptom relief using a team approach. Hospice is for those in the last six months of life; whereas, palliative care can be provided along with curative treatment. The goal for both is improved quality of life.

Most of our CT licensed Hospice providers also provide Palliative Care. In addition, there is a growing presence of palliative care programs in hospitals throughout CT which are programs developed by the hospitals and generally not affiliated with our Hospice and Palliative Care providers.

For this reason, we request to be considered for an equal number of seats on the advisory council to ensure that palliative care in the hospital setting as well as the community setting is reviewed as part of the council's focus. Many of the Hospice and Palliative Care providers have physician and nurse nationally certified Hospice



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and Palliative Care designation and would be highly recommended for this council. In addition, the providers have expert counseling staff including Licensed Certified Social Workers and Spiritual Counselors with decades of experience in this specialty.

Thank you for considering my testimony and if you have any questions, please contact me at Wodatch@cthealthcareathome.org or 203-774-4940.